

Special Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners
Leon County, Florida,
May 24, 2006
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Workshop

The Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida met in Special session on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at 1:10 p.m. in the Leon County Commission Chambers. Present were County Commissioners Thaell (acting Chairman), Sauls, and Rackleff. Also present was Assistant County Attorney Kinni, Assistant County Administrator Long, and Deputy Clerk Diane Norvell.

Pursuant to the following legal advertisement, the special meeting was conducted for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to brief the Board on FEMA's Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, and Mitigation programs.

Mr. Richard Smith, Director of Emergency Management, explained that FEMA is conducting a series of workshops throughout the state of Florida prior to the hurricane season. FEMA will provide a briefing and overview of the three programs. A packet of information was distributed to the Board and slide presentations were made.

Ms. Melissa Hood, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Lead Facilitator, appeared and explained that she works at the Long-term Recovery Office in Orlando, Florida. She pointed out that during the 2004-2005 hurricane season, there were some inconsistencies that came from FEMA involving staffing and information. The purpose of the workshops is to make positive efforts to better the relationship with the communities, counties and FEMA in Florida. The meeting will layout just what it is that FEMA does and how the public and government play into that. Ms. Hood pointed out that communication is the key in response and recovery after a storm event.

Linda Taylor, in the IA team and Velma Peppin, Western Area Field Office, representatives of the individual assistance program, gave a presentation on the preliminary damage assessment (pda) and the individual assistance program. The purpose of a pda is to identify the scope of damage and degree of damage, to identify staffing and funding needs and to identify special needs such as community relations for recovery centers. Others

issues discussed involved crisis counseling, coping after a disaster, SBA information, breakdown of limits for loans, toll free phone number for customer service, sequence of delivery, help from IRS, shelter after the storm, special assistance for unemployment due to the storm event, etc. Ms. Taylor pointed out that the mission of the IA Program is to provide applicants with all the programs they are eligible for. Individual Housing program encompasses housing assistance and other needs assistance which could involve uninsured and under-insured losses.

Commissioner Rackleff talked about neighboring counties assisting each other in a storm event and the importance of coordination. Mr. Smith stated that plans for long-term housing was also important and explained that staff is working on this issue including assisting neighboring counties.

In light of previous storms such as Ivan and Dennis, Commissioner Thaeli wanted to know if there were suggestions for enhancements in handling an event in the future. Ms. Taylor responded that emphasis should be about thinking ahead long-range rather than responding; the long-term recovery centers are one method. Local governments should keep in touch with counterparts, state and Federal, and the chain of command.

Ms. Julie Provost, FEMA, Public Assistance Lead with the western area field office, Jim Brewer, State Public Assistance, and Roger Jones, Acting Deputy Director appeared before the Board and gave a presentation on the Public Assistance Program. A slide show was used to explain Public Assistance Program which provides supplemental, federal disaster assistance for repair, replacement or restoration of disaster damaged publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain private non-profit organization. The team pointed out that those eligible for public assistance would include state and local governments (cities, counties, and school districts), Indian Tribes, and certain non-profit organizations.

Mr. Jones explained that his staff plans to be where the storm or disaster occurs to help people prepare and work through it and do what needs to be done to leave or whatever is mandated. One of the lessons learned from hurricane season of 2004 is that the rules were not distributed soon enough and sometimes the rules changed. Mr. Jones pointed out that the new draft Public Assistance Program 2006 is being reviewed and when finalized, it will be posted to the www.flpa.org website. It will have disaster specific

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guidance that tell what the rules are and various fact sheets to provide field advice and the national policies that apply.

Commissioner Thaelle spoke about past problems in getting budget authorization from State agencies in getting money out to the communities. He wanted to know if this was due to the legislative level in the State. He is interested in talking to the appropriate people about this.

The next item discussed was the Mitigation Assistance Program which provides MAP funds to assist states and communities to implement measures that reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures. Mr. Roy McClure, Mitigation Representative, spoke on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This program usually involves a long-term commitment to individuals which trying to reduce risk for future losses and help people get back on their feet. This come comes out of the national disaster program. He also spoke about the severe repetitive loss grant program which attempts to get individuals out the flood prone areas and comes out of the National Flood Insurance Program.

The Board thanked the team for the presentation.

There being no further business to come to the Board, the Special Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Approved: _____
Bill Proctor
Chairman

ATTEST:

Bob Inzer
Clerk of the Circuit Court